

At the interview, it was agreed that claim 14 would be amended so as to avoid BUERGER et al., and this is done as agreed at the interview.

In addition, we have amended claim 14 to delete the confusing phrase that the layers 2 and 3 are mutually connected by the material laminate 1. In fact, they are mutually connected by bonding sites 4, which claim 14 now says.

As was pointed out at the interview, BUERGER et al. have the defect that it is hot-embossed from both sides. If the material of BUERGER et al. were incorporated in the combination of the present invention, therefore, which is a four-layer combination, the layer which corresponds to our absorptive body 12 would have only interrupted contact with the BUERGER et al. construction. This means that the free flow of liquid into our absorptive body 12 would be impeded.

By contrast, the present invention is a four-layer construction. What we show in Fig. 2 is the top two layers. Beneath this is a layer 12 of absorptive body, and beneath that is the liquid impermeable layer 11. We show layers 11 and 12 only in our Fig. 8, because they are conventional.

What is not conventional, according to the present invention, is that our layer 3 and our layer 12 can lie flat against each other for maximum unimpaired liquid transfer from 3 to 12.

This is achieved by hot-embossing only in a direction through layer 2 and then through at least a part of layer 3. This one-way embossing leaves the underside of 3 flat and fully liquid-transmissive to 12.

BUERGER et al. are not confronted with this problem, because BUERGER et al. do not disclose anything corresponding to our layer 12.

As was pointed out at the interview, one-way embossing has been old for many years. So the present applicants did not invent one-way embossing: what they invented was one-way embossing in combination with an absorptive body 12 beneath our Figure 2 construction.

So far as we know, no one in this art has used one-way embossing of a composite layer, as a means to improve liquid transfer to a subjacent layer like our layer 12, and that, instead of mere one-way embossing, is what the present applicants have invented.

As this feature is now clearly brought out in amended claim 14, it is believed that claim 14, and the remaining claims that depend from it, are patentable, and reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes

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made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page
is captioned **"Version with markings to show changes made."**

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 14 was amended as follows:

--14. (amended) An absorbent product including a liquid-permeable fibrous material outer layer (2), a liquid-impermeable outer layer (11), an absorptive body (12) enclosed between the two outer layers (2, 11), and a liquid-permeable liquid-transferring porous and resilient material layer (3) arranged between the liquid-permeable outer layer (2) and the absorptive body (12), at least one of the liquid-permeable outer layer (2) and the liquid-permeable liquid-transferring layer (3) including thermoplastic material and the two material layers (2, 3) being mutually connected by [the material laminate (1) exhibiting] bonding sites (4) within which the thermoplastic material has been caused to at least partially soften or melt and thereby bond together the two material layers (2, 3), wherein the bonding areas extend in the thickness direction of the material laminate (1) only in a direction through the first material layer (2) and then [at least] through at least a part of the second material layer (3), said bonding areas being arranged in two or more groups (5) with at least two bonding sites (4) in each group (5), with the greatest relative distance between two bonding sites (4), which are situated adjacent to each other, in a particular group (5) being less than the shortest distance

between the group (5) and its closest adjacent group (5), as a result of which the material laminate (1) exhibits bond-free areas (6) between the bonding sites (4) within each bonding group (5) which have a higher density than bond-free areas (7, 9) of the material laminate which are situated between the bonding groups (5).--